

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T STATE 042056

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION BANGKOK INFO CICPAC FROM SECSTATE FEB 25

QUOTE S E C R E T STATE 042056

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TH

SUBJECT: FORCE REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND

REF: A. STATE 31539; B. STATE 35845; C. STATE 37235;

D. BANGKOK 2795

1. APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS REF D. YOU SHOULD PROCEED TO
INITIATE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENT AS OUTLINED
IN REF B WITH THE CONSIDERATIONS DISCUSSED BELOW IN MIND.

2. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THAI DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS
MAY REQUIRE EVIDENCE DURING THE SECOND HALF OF CY 1975 THAT
OUR REDEPLOYMENT PROGRAM HAS NOT STALLED. PARA 2 REF A
PROVIDES SOME FLEXIBILITY IN THIS REGARD IN THAT WE ARE

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PREPARED TO CONSIDER SOME REDUCTION BELOW THE 21,300 LEVEL

BEFORE THE FOURTH QUARTER OF FY 76. SHOULD IT ACTUALLY BECOME NECESSARY TO DO SO, WE WOULD LOOK FIRST TO NON-COMBAT UNITS IN VIEW OF OUR DESIRE TO MAINTAIN THE MAXIMUM STRIKE CAPABILITY POSSIBLE IN THAILAND THROUGH THE FY 76 DRY SEASON.

3. IN YOUR INITIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RTG, HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD KEEP OUR OPTIONS OPEN BY NOT DISCUSSING OUR PLANS BEYOND ON JUNE 30, 1975, OTHER THAN TO GIVE OUR

"BEST JUDGMENT" THAT WE WILL WANT TO BE DOWN TO A LEVEL OF 10,000 WITHIN TWO YEARS. YOU SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THE 21,300 AUTHORIZED MANPOWER SPACES AS OF JUNE 30 WILL REPRESENT A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION FROM THE CURRENT AUTHORIZED LEVEL OF SLIGHTLY LESS THAN 28,000 (WHICH INCLUDES THE 650 SAC SPACES REDEPLOYED BUT NOT YET ANNOUNCED). WE HOPE THAT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS PACKAGE AFTER MAY 1 WILL DEFUSE OUR PRESENCE AS A POLITICAL ISSUE FOR SOME TIME THEREAFTER.

4. WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THE PRESSURES THE THAI WILL BE UNDER TO INFORM THE PUBLIC THAT DRAWDOWN OF OUR MILITARY PRESENCE IS CONTINUING. THIS IS MAJOR REASON FOR OUR NOT WANTING TO PLAY ALL OUR CARDS EARLY IN THE GAME. DESPITE THE LIKELIHOOD OF LEAKAGE, HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO IMPRESS UPON THE RTG THE NEED TO AVOID PREMATURE PUBLICITY.

3. WE BELIEVE DISCUSSION OF THE PRECISE SQUADRONS TO BE WITHDRAWN AND THE TIMING OF THEIR REDEPLOYMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN UP LATER THE WORKING LEVEL. THIS WILL BE ADDRESSED IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE EQUIPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITS TO BE WITHDRAWN WHICH MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR TRANSFER TO THE THAI WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN UP ON AN AD HOC BASIS AS IN THE CASE OF REDEPLOYMENTS TO DATE.

6. AS NOTED IN REF C, OUR PLANS ARE TO KEEP KORAT OPERATIONAL AT LEAST THROUGH CY 76, THEREBY PROVIDING A SIGNIFICANT INDOCHINA ORIENTATION TO OUR PRESENCE
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DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD. OUR PLANS FOR CLOSURE OF UBON AND NKP ARE ALSO CONTAINED IN REF C. AS NOTED IN REF B, WE ENVISION MAJOR THAI PARTICIPATION IN PROVIDING ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE SERVICES AS WELL AS SECURITY AT UDORN THROUGH FY 77. WE WISH TO AVOID ANY SUGGESTION THAT WE PAY RENT FOR USE OF UDORN OR ANY OTHER THAI BASE. WE YIELD TO YOUR JUDGMENT ON THE INADVISABILITY OF RAISING OUR DESIRE FOR RE-ENTRY AND ROTATION RIGHTS AT UDORN

DURING YOUR INITIAL CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BUT BELIEVE
THIS MATTER MUST BE BROACHED REASONABLY EARLY IN THE
CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.

7. WHILE THE NEW PRIME MINISTER VERY WELL MAY DESIGNATE
KIRANGSAK AND THE US-THAI WORKING GROUP TO TAKE UP A
MORE DETAILED EXAMINATION OF OUR PROPOSAL, WE DO NOT
WISH TO FORCE HIS HAND BY PREMATURE DISCUSSION WITH
KRIANGSAK OR OTHERS. THEREFORE, YOU SHOULD WAIT UNTIL
THE PM HAS INDICATED HIS DESIRES BEFORE ANY INFORMAL
CONTACTS AT THE WORKING LEVEL ARE MADE. KISSINGER
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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NNN

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